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THE
STATE
OF
True RELIGION
IN ALL
AGES,
AND THE
CHARGES
ATTENDING
Divine Worship
CONSIDER'D.

With a Modest PLEA for the
Maintenance of the Christian Mi-
nisty.

Being a Discourse deliver'd at *Hempstead*
in *Hertfordshire*, December 12. 1725.

Wherein the Importance of the Thing it
self, is familiarly Debated, the Necessi-
ty Urg'd, and the vulgar Objections
of the Ill-affected against it, fairly an-
swer'd, suited to all Capacities.

By DAVID REES.

London, Printed by R. Tookey for Aaron Ward
at the King's Arms in Little Britain, and
J. Noon, at the White Hart in Cheapside.
M. DCCXXVI.

THE
STAFF
OF
THE REGIMENT

IN ALL
A G E S
AND T H E

C H A R I T Y

W I T H I N

THE R E G I M E N T

OF THE

ARMY

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

AND THE

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The PREFACE.



HAT the Substance of the ensuing Discourse was compos'd and preach'd at all, is owing to the strong Representations of a worthy Friend in London; who perswaded me, that something of this Nature, deliver'd in a plain Way, might very probably be useful in certain Parts of the Country.

That 'tis now Publish'd, is in a great Measure owing to the repeated Instances of my highly honour'd Brother, Doctor Philip James, || and of the || *M. D.* Church under his Care, and the Audience under his Ministry at Hempstead, whose kind and accurate joint Letters to this Purpose, I have now by me.

When I found that the good People were so willing to read over what they had once heard, (as they were pleas'd to declare it with great Satisfaction) and observing, that they were so far from taking it amiss, and being affrighted at the impartial Representation of their Duty. That on the contrary, they appear'd to receive the Message with gladness of Heart, and generously enter'd upon the laudable Practice of what had been sincerely recommended to 'em.

I tho't such good natur'd Usage, and Christian Reception, deserv'd to be graufied and acknowledg'd in as reasonable a Measure as the Publication of this seems to be. For hereby they will have a more deliberate Opportunity of acting the noble Berean Part, in searching the Scriptures daily, to know whether the Things they heard, have a sure and visible Foundation there.

I have room in this Place to premise cer-

tain Remarks, which tend to elucidate and help to clear up, some particular Points of the Subject contain'd in this Sermon. Which may not improperly be inserted in a Preface, and yet would look odd in the Discourse it self, and be apt to hinder and disturb the well-meaning Reader in the Perusal of it.

1. I observe the common Current of Expositors agreeing in the Supposition, that Melchizedec was a real Man, and with them I have readily gone. And yet it must be own'd, that [Man] is a Supplement in our Translation, Heb. 7. 4. Now consider how great this Man was, there is neither ἀνὴρ [Aner] nor ἄνθρωπος [Anthropos] nor any Thing else peremptorily to determine that he was proper Man, and not some other intelligent Being, in the appearance of human Form. †

Some learned Writers have taken hold of this Handle, and strenuously fallen in, with the other side of the Question, viz. That he was no other than the proper Son of God, the great high Priest of our Profession, the Prince of Peace, and King of Saints. Of this Number is Pet. Cunæus, who with great strength of Judgment, as well as very nice critical Learning, has left us an excellent profess'd Dissertation on this Head, de Repub. Hebr. lib. 3. cap. 3. However in a Point of meer Speculation as this is, there can be no great Danger in a modest Enquiry. That the vulgar Opinion, viz. his being one of the Sons of Noah, is not true, I think is plain enough, for we have an Account of their Parentage, and their Posterity; great Numbers of very curious Writers agree, that he was a Man, tho'

† ὅσῳ ἔτι ὅσον ἄνθρωπος ἔστι.

Intuemini autem quantus sit hic.

they differ in determining who he was.

Dr. Cave makes him to be one of the Reguli, or Petty Kings in the Land of Canaan, extraordinarily rais'd up and bro't in among the Canaanites, without any mention of his Original or End, of his Predecessor, or Successor, that he might be a fitter Type of Jesus Christ in all Things. As to his Royal Title King of Salem, it do's by no means interfere with his Priestly Function, nothing more common in ancient Times, than for the same Person to sustain both the Regal and Sacerdotal Characters, or to be both King and Priest.

Virgil introduces Anius, as King and Priest of the Island Delos,

Rex Anius, rex idem hominum, Phœbique
Sacerdos

Vittis & sacra redimitus tempora lauro,

Occurrit. 3 *Æn* —

And Cicero represents Romulus the First King of Rome, as one of the sacred Order, as well as rais'd to the Regal Dignity. Hujus urbis Parens Romulus, non solum auspiciatō urbem condidisse, sed ipse etiam optimus Augur fuisse traditur, *Lib. 1. de Divinat.*

But even the sacred Writings themselves, give us very memorable Instances to this Purpose. David King of Israel, was an eminent Prophet, and compos'd a variety of Psalms and Divine Songs for the public Celebration of the Worship of God. As for Solomon there is one of his Books that goes by the Title of that of the Preacher, and begins thus, The Words of the Preacher, the Son of Eccl. i. 1. David King of Jerusalem.

These Considerations put together, will help us easily to reconcile the two Appellations of Melchizedec, as King of Salem, and at the same Time Priest of the most high God.

2. The next Thing to be illustrated is, what demon-

demonstrable Proportion of maintenance the Levites had; and a learned Prelate [Bishop Barlow] hath left us an exact Calculation of their share, in his genuine Remains, Pag. 272.

‘ The Levites numbred from a Month old
 ‘ and upward, were not a twenty Seventh Part
 ‘ of the Israelites; and tho’ the Israelites
 ‘ were numbred only from Twenty Years old
 ‘ and upward, yet they contain’d the Number
 ‘ of the Levites 27 Times and 9550 over.
 ‘ And altho’ the Levites were so far from being
 ‘ a tenth Part, that they were not a twenty
 ‘ seventh Part of Israel, yet they [the Levites]
 ‘ had the Tenth of the whole Land, and many
 ‘ other Profits and Advantages, a Catalogue of
 ‘ which we have particularly Recorded in Num.
 ‘ 18. 8, 9, 10, &c. They had 48 Cities with
 ‘ their Suburbs or Territories for their Cattle,
 ‘ Josh. 21. more Cities than any other Tribe
 ‘ had, save the royal Tribe of Judah.

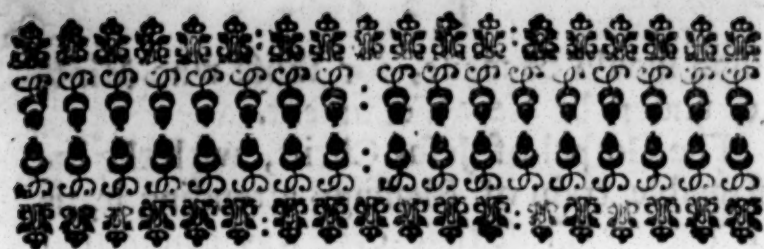
3. The last Thing to be consider’d is, how the first Ages of Christianity, supported their Ministry and Worship. We may form some tolerable Idea from the Scripture Account, how it was with the Apostles in their Time; they were in a great Measure itinerant, travelling much from Place to Place, and were succour’d and entertain’d by the Converts, whom they had made: These were mindful of them when in Distress, as we find Onesiphorus made it his Business to seek out the Apostle Paul, when a Prisoner in Rome; they made their Collections for the Relief of the Poor, and the Apostle shews, ’twas a standing Rule generally settled in the Churches, 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. Now concerning the Collection for the Saints, as I have given Order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first Day
 of

of the Week, let every one of you lay by him in Store, as God hath prosper'd him. And we find in the verse following, they remitted their Bounty from one Place to another, according to the Circumstances of the Saints. And when I come, whomsoever you shall approve by your Letters, them will I send to bring your Liberality unto Jerusalem.

The late Bishop of Sarum has touch'd upon this Point in his History, of the Rights of Princes, &c. p. 15, 16, 17. Having treated of the Method of Elections, he says, ' I shall give an Account in the next Place of the Provisions that were made for the Clergy. As he goes on, he observes, that the Apostle asserts the Right of Maintenance to those who minister'd in spiritual Things, as due by natural Equity, but sets no Rate: Yet 'tis not to be doubted, but that in the first Fervors of Christianity, there were large Offerings made, sufficient for the Occasions that called for them; for Lucian takes Notice, of the great readiness of the Christians to relieve any that came among 'em, especially such as suffer'd for the Faith; and a little lower, besides private Charities, there was a common Stock that was committed to the Bishop's Care; as * Justin Martyr informs us, he says, such as were Wealthy (did as they pleas'd every one freely) bring in what they tho't fit, which was gathered together, and put into the Hands of the President, who out of it reliev'd Orphans, Widows, sick Persons, Prisoners, Strangers, and all such as were in want.

¶ || Cornelius writes that in his Time, there were at Rome 1500 Widows and afflicted People, who were supplied by the Grace and Bounty of God, that is by Charity; so great were the Numbers of the Poor, and so large were the charitable Oblations of the Rich.

† And Cyprian tells us of the Manner of dividing these Oblations, they had at Carthage a monthly Dividend in which all the Ranks of the Clergy had their share. This Cyprian urges as a Reason, that Clergymen ought not to involve themselves in secular Affairs; instead thereof says he, such as are once by any Clerical Ordination promoted in the Church of God, ought not to be called away by any Thing from the Divine Ministry; nor be involv'd in worldly Troubles and Affairs, but being admitted to the Honour of the Brethren, they should be Day and Night employ'd in heavenly and spiritual Matters: There is a very handsome Account given of the usages of those Days, and of the Innovations that crept in gradually in after Ages, by that learned Prelate; but I shall detain the Reader here no longer, only to observe that 'tis certain in the main, that the conscientious and voluntary Contributions of the People, honourably supported their Ministry, and sufficiently provided for the Poor among 'em; and that according to the strictest search I can make at present, the Protestant Dissenters in England and Wales come nearest the primitive Model in these Things of any Body of profess'd Christians that I know of, upon the Face of the Earth.



THE
STATE
OF
RELIGION
IN ALL
AGES, &c.



I COR. ix. 14.

*Even so hath the Lord ordain'd, that
they which preach the Gospel, should
live of the Gospel.*



THESE Words fix the main-
tenance of the Christian Mi-
nisty upon a comparative
Foundation, and lead us
back to consider the Mo-
saic Settlement for the Sup-
port of the *Levitical Priesthood*; in order
to judge from thence, what reasonable Pro-
vision

B

vision should be made, for those who Minister under the New Testament.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, with the inestimable train of Blessings attending it, is the highest Trust that ever was committed to Mankind; the Administration and Enlargement of the Kingdom of Grace, depending, under the Influence of the Divine Spirit, on the due Improvement and faithful dispensing of the Word of Reconciliation. For tho' our Lord Christ is over all, and rich unto all, that call upon him. *Yet how shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? How beautiful are the Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things! So then Faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the Word of God.*

ROM. 10.
12, 13, 14,
15, 17.

From the Consideration of the Importance and Necessity of these Things, 'tis plain, that the Doctrine and Preaching of the Gospel, may be very honourably pleaded for, against the vain Philosophy of the fond Disputers of this World; as well as defended against the Torrent of Contempt and Disparagement, wherewith 'tis daily born down, by Multitudes of ignorant, irreligious, and prophane Men.

That chosen Vessel, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, did more than once magnify his Office, and Glory in that Character wherein he was vested, and in the Work and Employment whereunto he was called, appealing loudly to the whole World, *That he was not in the least ashamed*
of

of the Gospel of Christ; it being ordain'd to be the Power of God to Salvation, to all those that believe.

The same Ground in the main of Confidence towards God, and of Success amongst Men, is left us, even in the ordinary Ministration of the Word: Since the great Mediator has engag'd his powerful Presence, for the Encouragement of publick Worship: He that holds the Stars in his right Hand, and who preserves Light in golden Candlesticks, having graciously declar'd, *Lo I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.* Matt. 28, 20.

It therefore very nearly concerns Preachers and Hearers to consider well their Duty in this Point; how they may most effectually Support the Ministry of the Gospel, not only in their own Day, but approve themselves happy Instruments to perpetuate the same, and to transmit so great a Blessing, as the Purity of Divine Worship to Posterity; this may be deservedly call'd in Scripture Sense, living and dying to the Lord.

The Province assign'd me at this Time, is in some measure to urge and enforce this Duty, and to shew, that the Commands of God are express in this Case; and consequently, that there is an undeniable Obligation, on all Christian Worshippers, to contribute their utmost Endeavours, to promote the furtherance of the Gospel in the World.

And that I may frame a Method suitable to my Design of Brevity and Plainness, I shall digest the former Part of my Discourse into some distinct Propositions, such

as I hope will appear useful and introductory to my main Purpose, and then endeavour to demonstrate, that what is contain'd in these Propositions is grounded in the Holy Scriptures.

I am not insensible of the Disadvantages a Minister labours under in treating on this Subject, but since we have the Footsteps of inspir'd Writers, and even of our Saviour and his Apostles, in opening and settling the Gospel Dispensation after this manner, in making reasonable Allowances for those concern'd in the Ministry of it, we may venture to tread in their Paths.

In this View then, when Divine Authority shall clearly appear on our side, there will be good Reason to hope, that the Arguments produc'd, will have the greater weight, and stronger Influence on the Minds of Men.

I now proceed directly to the first Proposition, viz.

Prop. I. *There ever was a certain manifest Obligation on some to teach others the Knowledge of God, and the Ways of Piety and Religion from the very beginning of the World.*

This was God's ordinary Means of preserving and propagating, the necessary Notices of himself among the Children of Men. The Truth of this cannot be deny'd by any, that will look back to the Account that *Moses* gives us of the first and early Ages of the World, and their manner of knowing and worshipping God in those Times.

'Twas

'Twas the undoubted moral Duty of *Adam*, the Head and Source of Mankind, to inform his immediate Descendants, in what State and Condition they came into the World, and to let 'em know, that they were Children of sinful guilty Parents, under a just Sentence of Condemnation to Death; unless a way could be found out to pacify the Divine Wrath. *By one Man (himself) Sin having enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin.*

He surely told 'em, what had past since his and their Mother's Creation, and communicated to 'em the glimmering Hopes, graciously given by their awful Creator, when threatening the Tempter, he said, *That the Seed of the Woman, at last should bruise the Head of the beguiling Serpent.*

Thus he tutor'd and instructed 'em, and as they grew up to Years of Understanding, directed 'em to offer Sacrifices, to prepare and produce of what they had an Offering to the Lord. We read accordingly, that in Process of Time, *Cain bro't of the Fruit of the Ground, and Abel of the Firstlings of his Flock, and of the Fat thereof.* Gen. 4. 3.

Such a dutiful Behaviour, were it faithfully done as it was on the Part of *Abel*, seem'd the most likely way to appease the Divine Anger, and also to express an humble Thankfulness to God, for the Kindness and Bounty of his Providence towards 'em.

There is particular Notice taken of *Abel's* Performance at this Time, God testifying his Acceptance of his Gifts; therefore the Apostle has rank'd him among the notable Worthies recorded for their
signal

Heb. 11. 4. signal Faith and Zeal. *By Faith Abel offer'd a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain, viz. by Faith in the Mercy of God, and very probably in the Intimation, that his Father had given him of the abovementioned Seed.*

If we extend our View further, and consider Mankind as increasing, and multiplying upon the Face of the Earth; we may observe the good Men, not only as Masters of Families, and domestic Heads, governing, and providing for those under their Care. But we may look upon 'em, as spiritual Guides and Instructors, teaching them the Mind and Will of God, that they might walk in his fear.

Gen. 4 26. *Seth and Enos have the Honour to be represented as at the Head of a Generation, beginning to call upon the Name of the Lord; or as some will have it, just begun to be called by the Name of the Lord.*

Ver. 14, 25. *Enoch the Seventh from Adam is taken Notice of in the New Testament by Jude the Apostle, as Preaching or Prophefying even at that distance, concerning the End of the World; assuring, That the Lord would come with ten thousands of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all daring Sinners, for their ungodly Deeds, and their prophane and hard Speeches utter'd against God.*

2 Pet 2 5. *There is peculiar Honour done to the Character of Noah, not only as a righteous Person himself, but as a Preacher of Righteousness to others, and that at a Time when the whole World had shamefully left the Lord: He stood up as a faithful Monitor to a vile ungodly Generation, and therefore found Grace in the sight of God,*
so

so that himself and Family were signally saved, when the dreadful Deluge swept away the World of the Ungodly. Thus having been faithful to his Trust in the old World, he became Head of the New, and immediately built an Altar, and offer'd burnt Offerings to the God of his Preservation, as an Acknowledgment of Gen. 8. the gracious Deliverance he had receiv'd, 20, 21. and a fresh Pattern of religious Worship to his Family.

Lot is worthily recorded, as rebuking Lewdness of those round about him, vexing his righteous Soul, because of their filthy Deeds; and openly testifying his Abhorrence of the Abominations of the Time and Place wherein he liv'd. Therefore he was peculiarly favour'd and taken Gen. ch. Care of, that he might escape a share in 19. the common Calamity and destructive Vengeance.

Job who is allow'd to live near or about these Times, shews his religious Care, and great Concern for his Children and Relations; he was Jealous over 'em with a godly Jealousy, while they were receiving and returning their festival Visits, lest they might peradventure Sin against the Lord in so doing. Therefore we Job 1. 5; read, *He sent and sanctified them, viz. prayed for them; and charg'd them to sanctify themselves, and to be in a prepared Frame to wait upon God by Sacrifice. And he arose up early in the Morning and offer'd burnt Offerings, according to the Number of 'em all, and thus did Job continually.*

There is a distinguish'd Character given *Abraham* for instructing his numerous Household,

hold, and those under his Care, in the Ways of Religion; God expressed a peculiar Satisfaction in his Piety and Faithfulness as to this Point, that he would be sure to discharge his Duty, as 'twas expected from him: *For I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do Justice and Judgment.*

Gen. 18.
19.

We find the Name and Office of *Melchizedec* mention'd with sacred Awfulness and uncommon Veneration, as one highly exalted and dignified of the Lord, and intirely devoted to his Service; whose proper Function and principal Business of Life, 'twas to minister in Holy Things. Therefore he is by way of Eminence called the *Priest of the most high God*; but to close what I have to say under this Head.

Gen. 14.
18.

I shall only observe, that the First-born had a peculiar Privilege, not only in regard to his superior Rule over the rest; and his having a larger share of the Substance of his Father's House. But in a particular Manner, 'twas his Province to assist, and upon occasion to represent the Father in the Business of religious Worship; and 'tis in this Sense, that I understand the Heinousness and Aggravation of *Esau's Sin* † in the Sale of the Primogeniture, to gratify a furious sensual Appe-

† *In quo jure primogeniturae, comprehendebatur et jus Sacerdotij; tangit eos qui damni vitandi causa, conventos Christianos deserebant, in quibus Christiani tanquam Sacerdotes preces Deo offerunt.*
Grot. in loc.

tite, he rashly parted with his Right to act in religious Affairs, for this Reason he is justly call'd the || *prophane* Person *Esau*; nay, he spoke very lightly of his Birth-right, not valuing the high and awful Privilege of being entitled to minister in Divine Things, and what good shall this Birth-right do to me? But we read he sorely repented afterwards, and sought it again with Tears, yet found no means to recover it. And tho' he grew Wealthy and Powerful enough in the World, yet God did so order it, that true Religion went with the Family of his Brother *Jacob*.

Heb. 12.

16.

Gen. 25.

32.

Heb. 12.

17.

Again, 'tis in this Sense, that I understand those Places where * Priests are mention'd among the Children of *Israel* before the Institution of the *Levitical* Priesthood, let the *Priests* also which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, let not the Priests and the People break thro', to come up unto the Lord. There is good Reason to judge, that tho' this was before the delivery of the Law, and the express Settlement of their Order, that these Priests were the First-born, who used to direct in religious Affairs among their Brethren. Not to mention any special Revelations, that God made of himself to some extraordinary Persons in these Times,

Exo. 19.

2

I conclude, from what has been offer'd to support this Proposition, that it was

|| βέβηλος, profanus.

* Sacerdotes quoque] id est, primogeniti, Grot. in loc. — Dr. Cave's apparatus.

the more immediate Duty and Province of some to teach others, and to Minister in their behalf ordinarily in Divine Things.

I come now to the Second Proposition,
viz.

Prop. II. *That the Worshippers of the true God in all Ages, devoted some of the best of their worldly Substance, and were in Duty bound so to do, for the Honour and Service of the Divine Majesty.*

Surely this Practice was from the beginning look'd upon as highly reasonable, founded in Justice, and the Relation that we stand in to God; is it not fit and becoming, that the great God who made the World, and the Things that are therein; who fram'd Man at first after his own Image, gave him Dominion over all this lower Creation, spar'd him when he transgress'd, continuing him still upon the Earth in the Enjoyment of all good Things, should have the best returns of Gratitude from all those who draw nigh unto him? To be at the Expence of some worldly Substance to acknowledge the Divine Being, and our Allegiance to him; is the least that could, or can be expected from the sinful descendants of *Adam*.

I must have recourse to some of the Passages already mention'd, tho' with a different View, from that for which I cited 'em before; we find *Cain* and *Abel* bro't of what they had, according to their separate Employments, and different Methods of Living; an Offering to the Lord, the one of the Fruit of the Earth, for he

was

was a Tiller of the Ground; the other a Keeper of Sheep, who was conscientious, and did as God expected from him, bring the best he had, of the *Firslings of his Flock, and of the Fat thereof*; and the Lord looked favourably upon him and his Oblation, by graciously accepting of both. 'Tis a Sign, what inward Reverence and due Regard, *Abel* had for the Divine Being, in that he would Present the choicest he had, even such Offerings as God himself fixed upon, when he came expressly to make his demand, in settling Sacrifices under the ceremonial Law.

But to proceed in this Argument, because the History of their State before the Flood is very short and concise. *Noah* immediately upon his going out of the Ark, offer'd a burnt Offering out of what he had reserv'd. *Job* frequently offer'd Sacrifices, and very solemnly sanctified Himself and Family to wait upon God therein.

As soon as ever *Abraham* was called from *Haran*, and bro't to the Knowledge of the true God; we have an Account of his building several Altars, as he sojourn'd from one Place to another; at *Sichem*, at a Mountain Eastward, and at *Beer-sheba*, always willing and mindful, to make the best Preparations he could, to acknowledge the Author of his Being, and the God of all his Mercies. And yet which is very remarkable, this devout and exemplary Person, upon his return from the slaughter of those Kings; and having rescu'd his Kinsman *Lot* from the Hands of his Enemies, offer'd unto *Melchizedec*,

Gen. 14. *the Priest of the most high God*, Tithes of
 18, 19, 20. all. It seems plain, this was the Ground
 upon which *Abraham* acted in so doing;
 he consider'd, that *Melchizedec's* awful and
 sacred Character, being eminently employ'd
 in the Service of *the most high God*, de-
 manded such a dutiful Acknowledgment
 from him.

Heb. 7. 4. The Author of the Epistle to the *He-*
brews Reasons to this Purpose; now con-
 sider, *how great this Man was, unto whom*
even the Patriarch Abraham gave the
Tenth of the spoils. 'Tis very reasonable
 to suppose, that all other religious People,
 of what Rank soever, within the Com-
 pass of the Ministration of this extraor-
 dinary Person, made their constant Pre-
 sents toward celebrating and maintaining
 the Honour of the *God of Heaven*.

What I intend from what has been
 said to make good this Proposition; is to
 shew, that as God abundantly blessed
 these Men, so they were faithful and
 willing to make their Returns to him,
 and there was some Expence of worldly
 Substance requir'd to discharge the Service
 of God in all Ages, according to their
 way of Living in those Days. They had
 their *Altars and Oblations*, as well as their
 Posterity in distant Ages, who liv'd in a
 more settled State, and of whom we have
 a more clear and perfect Account.

Having thus taken a brief Survey of
 the Mode of Divine Worship, before the
 Commencement of the Law, we come di-
 rectly to consider what was ordain'd un-
 der that Dispensation.

And

And that I shall comprize in a Third Proposition, *viz.*

When God was pleas'd to signify his Will Prop. III.
to his People by a written Law, and to appoint in what Manner and Circumstances, he would be worshipp'd by them in a formal Church-state; there was a certain Order of Men devoted and maintain'd on Purpose, to attend and serve in Divine Things.

The delivery of the Law by *Moses*, and the first framing of the Jewish Church, and all the Ordinances attending it, is a sufficient Proof of the Truth of this.

The House and Family of *Levi*, being in a particular Manner set a-part for the Service of God; their Brethren of the other Tribes, were to look upon 'em as chosen for that Purpose; they were to hearken to 'em, and be directed by 'em, as far as they themselves acted in Divine Things, according to the Commands of God. And in Consideration of this, the *Levites* were to be provided for, and maintain'd by the rest of the Tribes.

That being discharg'd of all worldly Incumbrances, they might with greater Freedom and Devotedness, give themselves up to the Service of God; the Lord laying a peculiar Claim to the *Levites*, ordain'd an agreeable Maintenance for them in his own Way; they were not to have an Inheritance among their Brethren: And that they might be fully satisfied in the Provision that was made for 'em, the Lord declar'd, *That he himself was their Part*, Num. 18.
and 20, 23.

Num. 8. *and their Inheritance among the Children of*
 16, 18. *Israel.* The Lord had taken them unto
 himself, by way of Redemption or Ex-
 change, instead of the First-born of all the
 Children of *Israel.*

I need not observe, What an *honourable*
Settlement he secur'd for 'em, when
 the Tenth Part of the Substance and in-
 crease of the other Tribes, was allotted
 to the House of *Levi*: Eleven Tribes to
 maintain One; thus when the *Levites* had
 received their appointed Tithes from the
 People, and issued out their Proportion
 of *Tenth to the Priests*; the Lord de-
 clar'd his Approbation of the Settlement:
 And lest any covetous Person should be-
 grudge 'em what they had, the Lord vin-
 dicates their Honour, and shews his Satis-
 faction in what he had ordain'd; for it
 was accounted to 'em as the *Corn of the*
 30. *Threshing-floor*, and the increase of the
Wine-press. They had as much right to
 it, as if they had Land and Vineyards of
 their own, to manure and cultivate, and
 as if it had been the proper Fruit of
 their daily Industry and honest Labour.

I have looked back thus far, and trac'd
 Circumstances in this order, that you
 might be able to see, the ancient Customs and
 Institutions, as well as the Charges attend-
 ing Divine Worship in one direct View;
 and this will naturally lead us to our pre-
 sent Case, a business that highly concerns
 the Honour and Interest of our Redeem-
 er in the World, viz. the maintenance of
 the Ministry of the Gospel. *Even so has*
the Lord ordain'd, that they which preach the
Gospel, should live of the Gospel.

Ac-

Accordingly I have Two Things before me.

1. To prove, *that our Lord Christ the Author of the Gospel, has settled a constant, regular Ministry in his Church.*

2. *That all who worship and profess the Name of Jesus Christ, are in Duty oblig'd to contribute to the Support of this Ministry.*

Surely, if the God of Order, took such Care of those concern'd in his Worship, under the former Dispensation; he has not left the Ministers of the New Testament so precariously destitute, as some sort of Men would make us believe he has.

1. As to the former of these, that our Lord Christ has settled, and left a regular constant *Ministry* in his Church, none will deny; but such who are profess'd Enemies to revealed Religion, and consequently to Christ and his Kingdom. One famous Prophecy concerning the *Messiah* was that when he came, by him and his order *the Gospel should be preached to the Poor.*

John the Baptist, that *Elias*, that forerunner of Glad-tidings, usher'd in the dawn of Gospel-light, afterwards immediately arose the glorious *Sun of Righteousness* with healing in his Wings; and when our Saviour had submitted to Holy Baptism, the Spirit having descended on him, the Father openly testifying his full Approbation of him, as every way qualified for the great Work he was entering upon, having fasted, pray'd, and been tempted of the Devil.

All

All these Things order'd in infinite Wisdom as Preparatory, we find he begun his publick Ministry, preach'd the Gospel in his own Person; wro't mighty Signs and Wonders, to confirm his Doctrine, and to convince the World that he was come from God. Having thus proclaim'd the last and purest Dispensation; he calls to him twelve Disciples, as *Ministers of his Kingdom*, to whom he gave Authority to preach the same Doctrine, and to work the like Miracles. The Names, with the Commission and Charge of the twelve Disciples or Apostles, we have expressly recorded.

Matt. 10

It appears afterwards, that because the Harvest was great, and the Labourers very few, that he called *Seventy other Disciples*, as Assistants in the awful Affairs of his Kingdom. Our Lord himself accordingly proceeded in the Work of his publick Ministry, which lasted for somewhat above the space of *three Years*. And then he was put to Death according to the Scriptures, for the Transgressions of his People, and to bring in an *everlasting Righteousness*. The Power of the Grave, and the bands of Death were not able to hold him; he rose the third Day, and thereby was declar'd to be the Son of God with Power; after his Resurrection he manifested himself to his Disciples, confirming their Faith in him, communing with them, and opening their Understandings, that they might understand those Scriptures, that particularly related to himself, as the great Mediator. He gave 'em full Assurance, that all Power in

Luke 10.

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in Heaven and in Earth was in his Hands, and having settled all Things in this lower World, took his leave of them in the most solemn and endearing Manner, and then was received up into Glory.

'Tis observable, that his farewell Charge to them, and thro' them to all their faithful Successors, was, That they should preach the Gospel, and administer it's Ordinances; having a most encouraging Promise annex'd thereunto. *Go ye therefore and teach* Matt. 28.
all Nations, baptizing in the Name of the ult.
Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded, and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World.

The Apostles were intent upon their Work after their Lord's departure, and began by filling up their Number in choosing *Matthias* in the room of *Judas* the Traitor, to take part of the same Ministry and Apostleship with them. And while they waited altogether to receive the Accomplishment of the Holy Ghost, they were enabled to speak with divers Tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, and so were qualified to obey the Command, in going abroad to preach the Gospel to all Nations.

Nor were they left alone in this great Enterprize, the Lord soon rais'd 'em faithful Assistants to carry on the Work, for he ascended on high to give Gifts unto Men. Accordingly *he sent, and gave some* Eph. 4. 10.
Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of
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the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Thus appear'd Mark and Luke, Paul and Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Archippus, &c. wonderfully devoted and set apart for the preaching of the Gospel, planting of Churches, and Ordaining Elders in divers Cities and Countries.

Nor did Things rest here, the Ministry of the Gospel was not to die with that Age; but to be supported and continued, even to the end of the World, as our Saviour had promis'd his Presence for that End.

Accordingly the Apostles had their Successors, Men of eminent Faithfulness and Sanctity, as Polycarp, Ignatius, Clemens, &c. fitted for the great Work before 'em.

And that I may give a little Light into the manner of their Progress; give me leave to lay before you a passage out of a very learned † Writer, of undoubted Credit, who has made it his Business to Treat of these Things, speaking ' of the beginning of Christianity, and citing that ' Text Rom. x. 18. *Their sound went into ' all the Earth, and their Words unto the ' end of the World.* Every one taking a ' particular part of the World, for his ' proper Province, to make known the ' joyful News of Life and Salvation thro' ' Christ therein.

' Thus St. Andrew principally preach'd ' the Gospel in Scythia, St. Bartholomew in ' India, St. Matthew in Parthia, St. John in ' the lesser Asia; and all the rest of the ' Apostles had their particular Provinces

† Enquiry into the Const. Discip. Unity, &c. of the Prim. Ch. p. 10, 11. Edit. 1712.

allotted 'em; wherein they went forth
 preaching the Gospel. And as they came
 to any City, Town or Village, they pub-
 lish'd to the Inhabitants thereof, the blef-
 sed News of Life, and Immortality thro'
 Jesus Christ, Constituting the first *Con-*
verts of every Place thro' which they
 passed, *Bishops* and *Deacons* of those
 Churches which they gathered, so saith
Clement Romanus; the Apostles went forth
 preaching in City and Country, appoint-
 ing the first Fruits of their Ministry, for
 Bishops and Deacons, generally leaving
 those Bishops and Deacons, to Govern
 and Enlarge those particular Churches
 over which they had placed them; whilst
 they themselves passed forward, planted
 other Churches, and placed Governors
 over 'em. * Thus saith *Textullian*, *Clemens*
 was Ordain'd Bishop of *Rome* by *St. Peter*,
 and *Polycarp* Bishop of *Smirna* by *St. John*.

Thus they very Couragiously proceeded,
 and under very great Oppressions, cruel
 Persecutions, and thro' Rivers of Blood;
 Christ has Miraculously preserv'd his Church
 and Ministry, thro' all succeeding Ages, for
 the space of near Seventeen Hundred Years,
 even to our Day. 'Tis for this Ministry
 and the Maintenance thereof, that we are
 so much concern'd. And therefore I am to
 endeavour to shew that the Persons engag'd
 herein, being *first* called of God by his
 Spirit and Grace, and *then* being approv'd
 and called forth by the Church or People,

* *Smirnaeorum Ecclesia habens Polycarpum, ab
 Johanne conlocatum, Romanorum Clementem a
 Petro Ordinatum. De præscrip. advers: Hæret.*
 p. 80.

And *Lastly*, Being Ordain'd and set part for this Solem Function.

These Persons, I say, ought to be maintain'd by it and for it, or in the Apostle's Phrase, *even so has the Lord Ordain'd, that they which Preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.*

In order to make this appear, I would offer these following Arguments.

- I. *First*, 'Tis founded in Justice and Equity, in the very Nature and Reason of the Thing. He that has devoted himself to the Ministry of the Gospel, by a Divine Call, and the Request of Men; should in point of Right, live by the exercise and discharge of that honourable Function. 'Tis an Employ of Publick concernment, it most nearly affects others in the most Important Part, and they themselves must acknowledge it upon a due consideration: Who undertakes a Publick Character for the safety and good of others, and ought not to have a reasonable Consideration for it?

The Apostle has given us variety of Instances of different Natures, to Illustrate this Argument I am now upon; particularly, in our preceding Context, *v. 7. who goeth a Warfare any time as his own Charge?*

Surely no Prince or State ever sent a *Leader* of their Armies against the Enemy, but what was supply'd with suitable Provision, and all necessary Furniture, to enable him to make his Stand and Appearance in the Field. If it be expected that he should set out, and encounter with any Success, let him be equip'd, and furnish'd out answerably, by those who have employ'd him.

Thus

Thus much is fairly contain'd in the Apostles Reasoning on this Particular.

The *Generous Lehder*, not only ventures his own Life and Honour, but he stands the greatest Dangers, in the Defence and Service of others, and therefore a ready and reasonable Provision should be made for him.

The Christian profession is often in the New Testament compar'd to a Warfaring State, and if Christ be the Great Captain of our Salvation, the Ministers of the Gospel are the Officers under him; and certainly they ought not to be left to the Scorn and Contempt of a cruel and ill-natur'd World.

Besides, the Reason holds good further, they might perhaps manage their own private Warfare, and save their own Souls, but they expose themselves for the Sakes, and Advantage of others; therefore tis but just and equitable that they should be carefully succour'd and provided for.

Suffer me only to Apply this instance very briefly, yet very plainly for the Sakes of the meaner Capacities.

You must know then, that a Minister of a Congregation, is the Person intended going a Warfare, leading of others out by his sound Doctrine and good Example, against the Evil and his Kingdom, against a malicious, ignorant Generation, against many prophane Scoffers and Revilers, Enemies to all that is Good, and is there no Fund of necessary Supply, to bear up his Spirits, and strengthen his Hand, in so excellent a Cause as this?

Let

Let us now View the next Similie, the Apostle makes use of, *Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the Fruit thereof?*

The Reasoning contain'd here is very obvious, it would be strange and unnatural indeed, for a Man to Dig and Toil, and spend his Time and Strength, in Planting and Raising a Vineyard, and yet not to taste of the Fruit thereof, both for Pleasure and Refreshment.

The Application of this Part is fairly this, a *Minister* is the Planter of the Vineyard, he bestows his Time and Labour, his Understanding and Strength, in endeavouring to Plant and Settle, to instruct and edify the Churches of Jesus Christ. And must he not have the Necessaries of Life, while he is thus employed in the best Work, and often in the Sweat of his Brow, striving to improve and cultivate his Lords Vineyard.

I shall at present mention but one more of the agreeable instances the Apostle has produc'd to this purpose, *Who feedeth a Flock and eateth not of the Milk of the Flock?*

This is so familiar a way of Reasoning, that it can't but suit the Capacities of all sorts of People. Who would look after a Flock in the Heat of the Day, and Dew of the Night, if he might have neither Wooll to cloath him, nor Milk to feed him? The Apostle well understood the make and temper of Mankind, and therefore he Addresses himself in a way most likely to convince and strike the Mind, by the most apt Similitudes that could be tho't of.

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These things are so very plain and instructive, that he appeals to the common senses of all People; the Evidence of this Argument speaks for it self, let any Man make it his own Case, and only imagine himself in the Room of a Minister, and I am sure he will agree to this way of Reasoning. The *Shepherd, or Person* looking after the Flock, is the Pastor of a Church or Congregation of Christians, he watcheth over their Souls as one that must give an Account. He feeds 'em with Knowledge and Understanding, he breaks unto 'em the Bread of Life, he guides and leads 'em by Divine Counsels and Perswasions, building them up in their most holy Faith.

Now if the Pastor feeds his Flock after this manner with Spirituals, will any People think much to supply him with Temporals; thus the Apostle in 11. Verse of our Context, *if we have sown unto you Spiritual Things, is it a great Thing if we reap of your carnal Things?*

I am sure the exchange in this Point, turns vastly to the Advantage of the Hearer. Spiritual Things I hope far exceed all Temporals; and the Knowledge of God is infinitely preferable to the perishing Dross of this Earth. And consequently a faithful preacher of the Gospel well deserves a comfortable share of the Supplies of Life, and ought always to be accounted highly worthy of due esteem, and of all the grateful Returns that can be made to him from a willing People.

II. *Secondly*, The next Argument is taken from the Divine Institution of a liberal Allowance

lowance to those who minister'd under the former Dispensation.

The Apostle takes it for granted, that they would be easily convinc'd of the Reasonableness of their Duty, since it had been a practice of a long standing in the Jewish Church, and that of God's own appointment, to allow liberally for the Maintenance of the Priesthood; *do ye not know that they which Minister about Holy Things, live of the things of the Temple? and they which wait at the Altar, are Partakers with the Altar.* And indeed who is there that has read the Old Testament, but what must know that the Priests liv'd by their Office? they minister'd in Holy Things for the Lord and the People, and their Ministry honourably maintain'd 'em. They serv'd at the Altar, and from thence a plentiful provision was allow'd 'em. They and their Families were to partake of the best Oblations, the Lord expressly providing that their Sons and their Daughters, and all who were clean in their Households, should eat of the choicest Fruits of the Land.

I shall mention but one Passage for satisfaction in this Point.

And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying,
 Num. 18. *behold, I have given thee the charge of mine*
 8. 9. 11. *heave-offerings, of all the hallowed things of the*
 12. *Children of Israel; unto thee have I given them*
by reason of the anointing, and to thy Sons for
an ordinance for ever. This shall be thine of
the most holy things reserved from the fire, e-
very oblation of theirs, every meat-offering of
theirs, and every trespass-offering of theirs,
which they shall render unto me, shall be most
holy

holy for thee and thy Sons. I have given them unto thee, and to thy Sons, and to thy Daughters with thee, by a statute for ever, every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. All the best of the Oyl, and all the best of the Wine, and of the Wheat, the first-fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee.

I would not be misunderstood upon this Head, as if I intended to plead for Luxury and Voluptuous Living, far from it, God forbid ! but I set this passage before the Eyes of some ill-natured sort of People, who would have Ministers lead a dejected, very mean if not half starv'd Life, who begrudge 'em even so much as common fare with their Neighbours, and think, if they come up to this, 'tis too good for 'em. *But I hope better things tho' I thus speak,* of the generality of Hearers, they have a more agreeable sense of Justice, Gratitude and Generosity. Ministers are Usually bro't up as tender as other Men, tis great pity (if they are faithful especially) they should be expos'd to any hardships as to Food and Raiment, and supply for their Families, when they are settled in their Work ; much more is it, that they should be neglected in their Old Age, and made to feel want and scarcity, after they have born the heat of the Day. Close Application in a studious contemplative Life, is not the best friend to the Constitution, constant, laborious preaching and frequent fastings are commonly attended with a train of diverse weaknesses, and indispositions.

The consideration of this calls for some tender usage, and requires the agreeable

E Supports

¹ Tim. 5. Supports of Life. *Drink no longer Water, but use a little Wine, for thy Stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.*

III. Thirdly, The next Argument that I offer, is from the difficult and important Nature of the Work of the Ministry; 'tis enough to take up the whole of any Man's Time. The Apostle might well say, *but we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.* And who is sufficient for these things? 'Tis a Work that necessarily requires Leisure and Application, says the Apostle to Timothy, *Meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to 'em, that thy profiting may appear to all, take heed unto thy self, and unto thy Doctrine, again, study to shew thy self approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

² Tim. 2.
15.

He that is appointed to feed others with Knowledge and Understanding, should have his allowance of Time to prepare their Spiritual Food for 'em, *that he may be able to bring forth out of his Treasure things new and old.*

Hos. 4.
5, 6.

Or else that terrible threatning of God thro' the Prophet may be justly apply'd to both the Minister and the People. *Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the Prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy Mother. My People are destroyed for lack of knowledge, because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me.*

The Deep things of God, and the Ministries of our Holy Religion, are not search'd out to any good purpose, without very considerable Pains; we must daily study
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the Holy Scriptures, with all the agreeable helps we can come at, comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual. *If we cry after Knowledge, and lift up our Voice for Understanding, if we seek her as Silver, and search for her as for hid Treasure, then shall we understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.* He that has not sufficient Time for these Things, nor proper Means (Books) to assist him in his Closet, must appear very mean in the Pulpit, and speak but little to the Profit and Edification of those he is concern'd with. But what is more amazing still, the People love, or at least seem easy to have it so.

It may not be amiss for me to take notice here, that there are two sorts of Persons engag'd in the Work of the Ministry. The one labours under the disadvantage of a very sparing and slender Education, the other has been bro't up in the Study of some useful Branches of Literature; now 'tis hard to determine which of these two, has most need of a comfortable Maintenance, to make his Mind easy, and to give him suitable leisure to attend his great Work.

As to the former of these, he is unhappily cramp'd, and oblig'd to turn himself within the compass of his bare Bible, or it may be a few plain Books besides, that tend but very little to advance useful Knowledge. If this Man be obliged to work with his Hands, and to maintain himself and Family by his industry in Worldly affairs, you may easily guess, what a lean, unedifying Ministry his must be; and it does not lie in his Power to mend it. It can't in reason be otherwise expected from

him. He is rather to be tenderly pitied than blamed. He has not Money to purchase useful Books in his Mother Tongue, nor has he leisure to peruse them were they freely presented him. Whereas, if this Person was discharg'd of the incumbrances of the World, that he might devote himself intirely to Reading, Study, and the improvement of his Intellectuals; he might become, not only a workman that needed not to be ashamed, but an Ornament in his Day. Not to mention the deceas'd, whose Works yet speak honourably for 'em. I could give many living instances of the truth of this, were it either necessary or proper.

But let us now turn our Eye to the other sort, who has been train'd up to some tolerable degree of Learning, we are to observe then, that according to the usual Method of Education, Languages and some parts of Philosophy take up the first Years of Manhood, the proper Study of Divinity being left to the last, reserv'd as a Diadem to crown all.

When this Person is settled in the Ministry, not having half a necessary Maintenance, what must, or can be expected from him? Were I to speak my mind freely, he is the more miserable of the two. He can't work with his Hands, for he was bro't up to no Secular Business; 'tis impossible he should, with any peace and vigour of mind persue his Studies, Anxious Cares will unavoidably prevent that. In short, he is in a ready way to be starv'd in both, Body and Mind, and to become dejected, dispirited and useless in his Day. *Quis talia fando temperet a lachrymis!* many a brave uncom-

uncommon Genius hath been cramp'd, depressed and buried in Obscurity, in these very Circumstances I have now mention'd. But what a discouragement in the mean time must this be to any, to turn their thro'ts towards the Ministry, and yet, the most necessary work in the World, *the Harvest truly is great, but the labourers are very few*, I mean such as are qualified for, and faithful in that Awful Character,

Upon the whole, the state of the Case is this, and may be bro't within a very narrow compass.

'Tis the Notorious fault of the People; that they have no better preaching in many places in this Nation; no wonder if their Bread be Course, scarce eatable, where they give little or nothing for it.

'Tis strange that any should be their own Enemies, and that in the most Important Affair, and be so little concern'd about the Salvation of their own Souls, as to be contented with any thing, whether it deserves the Name of a Ministry or no, and all this to save a little Worldly Substance.

Oh sad, unhappy wretched covetousness! the Root of all Evil.

I am loth to say it, and yet I am satisfied in the truth of it, that there are many Rich Tradersmen, and Wealthy Farmers attending in many Towns and Villages in this Nation, who have their Purse of Gold ready by 'em, waiting for the welcome News of a Purchase or Mortgage offer'd to their Hand. Who yet will scarce advance twenty Shillings a Year extraordinary, for the sake of a Judicious and Solid Ministry. Are Lands and Houses and the increase of
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Corn and Cattle of more value than the Souls of Men? is there any more likely way to save your own Souls, and those of your Children and Families, than by sitting under a sound and able Ministry; then look out for such a one. Put a just esteem and value upon it, resolve to allow for the honourable Maintenance of it, and encourage others so to do; and you'll find 'twill turn to your infinite Comfort and Advantage in the End. You'll have, when they are wanted, Men of Integrity and Ability, that will adorn and recommend Religion, to be your watchful Guides, to go in and out before you.

IV. I come to urge our Lord's own direct Appointment, than which nothing can carry with it more awful Authority. If Christ has Ordain'd that Men should freely give to support the Ministry of his Gospel, surely they will hearken to the Voice of their Saviour, as they expect favour when they appear in his sight; and this he has fully and expressly done. *even so has the Lord ordain'd, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.*

Mat. 10.
7, 9

Luke 10.

The original Commission given to the Disciples was, *go preach, saying the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, provide neither Gold, nor Silver, nor Brass in your Purses, for the workman is worthy of his Meat, and the labourer of his Hire.*

'Tis plain our Saviour sent them forth in his Name, to try what reception they should find in the World. They were not to set out at their own Charge, nor to expend the little Substance they had of their own, but to be maintain'd by those to whom they were

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were sent, they were expressly forbid to carry with them, Gold, Silver, or Brass, there Reason is plain and convincing, *the labourer is worthy of his hire.* And surely the Servants of such a Lord deserv'd a kind Entertainment, the Messengers of such glad Tidings ought to have a very welcome reception; accordingly their Lord demanded and expected it from those who were honour'd with their Presence and Message.

They are very awful words, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, receiveth him that sent me.* *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* Matt. 10. 40. Luke 10. 16.

All this is verifi'd in our Day with regard to faithful Ministers, and will be made good to the very End of the World. Whether Men consider it or no, the Laws of Christ's Kingdom are still the same, and he expects a willing Obedience to 'em; the standing irreversible order is, that they which are taught in the Word, do, freely communicate to them, who teach in all good Things And 'tis added in the Words following, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a Man soweth that shall he also reap.*

Since it is thus, that our Lord Christ the Author of the Gospel, Redeemer of his Church and People, and Judge of the World; has undeniably ordain'd a maintenance for the Ministers of his Word, then suffer me to beseech and intreat you, to receive 'em as his Ambassadors, who represent his awful Person, esteem 'em as such, make a competent Provision for 'em, while

while they are feeding you with Divine Knowledge, and leading you in the way to eternal Life.

Thus I have endeavour'd to shew you, the Ground upon which the maintenance of the Ministry is founded, in as plain and brief a manner as I could. I shall take notice but of two Objections at present, and so pass on.

Obj. 1. The one is this, 'Tis not ascertain'd and determin'd what must and should be allowed for this Service.

An. I Answer, this do's not discharge any from their Obligation to the Duty it self, every one ought to contribute according to his Substance and Ability, till the Ministry is honourably provided for; and the Minister plac'd above the Apprehensions of want, or any contempt upon that Account! That he may be able to answer with ease and honesty the demands of Life, and provide for his Family with Reputation. To be plain in this Case, the maintenance of a Minister ought to be more than just enough to keep him from real want, it should be sufficient to enable him to sustain every Branch of his tender and sacred Character; to be *given to Hospitality*, is one express Qualification required in a Minister: And how shall he open his Hand and his House to entertain and relieve others, unless the People by their free and generous Allowances, put it in his Power so to do?

Again, that Man is unworthy of the Christian Profession, nay, *said to be worse than an Infidel*, who do's not provide for his Family, those of his own House, especially

cially his own Flesh and Blood. 'Tis but a melancholy Prospect, and it creates many dark Apprehensions, when a Minister has but meerly a bare Subsistence, and is able to leave nothing in Store, for a poor Widow, and fatherless Children, when his own Head is laid. And I have sometimes Thought, that the Relict and Descendants of such a Minister must have more than ordinary Impressions of religion, if they don't on Occasions, severely reflect on the Conduct of such a Person, who for the sake of serving the Publick by his Ministry, left his own Family so very bare behind him in the World. How far the Gospel requires Self-denial in this Point, I will not at present pretend to determine.

However, I should think that the Consideration of these Things, might somewhat enlarge the Hearts of all, in whose Power it is, to have a very favourable Regard to those Ministers; especially, who are surrounded with numerous Families, and yet but in low Circumstances, as to the Things of this World.

2. The other vulgar Objection is this, if Ministers of the Gospel are paid for their Ministration, then they may be justly look'd upon, as no better than Hirelings.

The shortest way to answer this Objection, is to shew what Hirelings are; or who properly deserve that Name. In short, they are such as preach for a Living, purely with that View; such as would not meddle with the Gospel and the Service of Christ, if their Livings and Emoluments were allow'd 'em without it, they

are such whose Aim and Business is to aggrandize themselves, and rise to Preferments in this World, by their appearance in the sacred Order of the Ministry. They have no concern for the Souls of Men, and don't care what becomes of the Flock; if they themselves can but live in Fulness and Luxury. The Prophet *Ezekiel* has denounced a terrible Wo against such.

Chap. 34. *Wo be to the Shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves; should not the Shepherds feed the Flocks? Ye eat the Fat, and ye cloath you with the Wooll, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the Flock. I have nothing to do with these Prophets, nor yet with their Wages.*

I am speaking of, and pleading for the faithful Servants of Jesus Christ, who love him, and serve him out of a Principle of Love, and a tender Concern for the Salvation of Mankind. *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your Servants for Jesus sake.*

All sincere Preachers, and Pastors are of this Number, and are properly call'd the *Ministers or Servants of the Churches* for their awful Master's sake: They watch not only over their own Souls, but the Souls of others, they endeavour to approve themselves to every *Man's Conscience, as faithful Stewards of the manifold Mysteries of Christ*. They are his Ambassadors, to treat with a rebellious, stubborn, and ignorant World, who lay out their Health and Strength, in promoting the glorious Gospel of the Son of God, and who look further than the Hands of Men, even to the Hands of their exalt-
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ed Redeemer, for a Reward and Crown of Glory,

I shall now instead of any other Application of this Discourse, close all, by adding some suitable Motives, to induce and encourage those that are able to Support the Ministers of the Gospel in their great and necessary Work.

1. Remember that whilst you strengthen their Hands, you are in some Sense *Fellow-labourers* with 'em in the Vineyard and Harvest of our Lord. To give conscientiously towards maintaining the Ministry of the Gospel, will entitle you to a share *in the Glory that shall be revealed.*

If the Consideration of this, will not prevail with Men that firmly believe a future State of Retribution, I know not what will; do you find any laudable Zeal, and holy working in your Minds, to be useful in the Salvation of others? And would you be partakers of the Honour and Reward of well-doing, in winning Souls to God? Then Support those who industriously Labour in the Word and Doctrine. Read and consider well what is said, *They Dan. 12. that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the 3. Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever. Know James 5. assuredly, that he which converteth a Sinner 20. from the error of his Way, shall save a Soul from Death, and hide a multitude of Sins. Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season, Gal. 6. 9. ye shall reap if ye faint not. Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, 1 Cor. 15. always abounding in the work of the Lord, for 58. as much as ye know, that your Labour is not*

in vain in the Lord. For God is not unrighteous to forget your Work and Labour of Love, which ye have shewed toward his Name, in that ye have minister'd to the Saints and do Minister. These Words shall not fall to the Ground, they shall answer the End for which they were spoken, he is faithful that has promised. Therefore consider the End of such a Conversation, keep your Eye upon the Recompence of the Reward, looking further than the Things that are seen which are but Temporal, even to the Things that are not seen which are Eternal.

2. To support the Interest of Christ and Religion, is the most honourable Way of laying out your Substance, in the esteem of all serious and religious People, acting from a sincere Principle in this Point claims, a just and allowable Regard from both God and good Men; free from any abject and vain Applause, that a pharisaical Spirit is so fond of We read of some whose *Praise was in the Gospel, thro' all the Churches*: there are some Names and Characters handed down in the Holy Scriptures, with a very recommending, grateful remembrance of those Persons, and of what they did, meerly for their shewing great and remarkable Respect, to those who minister'd for God in *Holy Things*. The Lord always signified his high Approbation of the Actions of willing Minds, manifested in a liberal Behaviour towards his Servants; *he loveth a chearful Giver*. And he has often shewn, and do's still even in our Day, give distinguishing Marks of his Favour to such, in a visible manner,

ner, in this present Life. 'Tis said, *That God blessed the House of Obed-edom, and all that pertain'd unto him, because of his Ark having Entertainment there, for the space of some Months.*

I shall take the Liberty to lay before you, some other particular plain Instances to this Purpose, and leave the Enlargement on these Things, to your serious Meditations. I can't pass by the famous Case of the generous *Shunamitish* Woman, who was as notably rewarded, for shewing tender Respect to the Prophet *Elisha*, in ² King. 4: not only giving him Bread and Entertainment, as he sojourn'd; but in causing a distinct commodious Apartment to be built for him, that he might use it as his own, when he pass'd and repass'd that way. And 'tis said she did this, because she perceiv'd him to be an *Holy Man of God*, often coming by her Habitation in his Travels.

There is a peculiar Beauty in the familiar Style, and lively Representation of the sacred Historian, *And it fell on that Day that Elisha pass'd to Shunem, where was a great Woman (in worldly Circumstances) and she constrained him to eat Bread, and so it was, that as oft as he pass'd by, he turn'd in thither to eat Bread; and she said unto her Husband, behold now, I perceive, that this is an Holy Man of God, which passeth by us continually, let us make a little Chamber, I pray thee on the Wall, and let us set for him there a Bed, and a Table, and a Stool, and a Candlestick, and it shall be when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.*

And

And what was done by the Divine Hand in Consideration of this eminent Zeal? The Lord gave her the desirable Blessing of a Son, miraculously rais'd him to Life again when he was really dead, gave her Favour in the Eyes of the King, who caused her House and Land to be restored to her and her Family, which she had been oblig'd to quit for the space of seven Years together, on Account of a very severe Famine: Again, it seems at first view, but as a trifling and insignificant Thing, that the Woman in the Gospel should

Matt. 26. 7. pour such || a *Box* of Ointment on our Saviours Head; but 'twas order'd in Divine Wisdom so, that it was a prefigure of the manner of his Burial: And he took such Notice of it, as to call it a good Work wro't upon him, and declar'd it should never be forgotten, but where-ever the Gospel should be preach'd in the whole World, there should this Thing also, be told as a Memorial of her. The Apostle has gratefully recorded the Zeal and Liberality of *Onesiphorus*, who made it his Business to find him out, tho' in a Prison, *often refresh'd him, and was not asham'd of his Chain*; now in requital of such a Christian Behaviour, the Apostle prays, *That*

2 Tim. I.
16, 17.

|| 'Tis called a *Box* of very precious Ointment, being compounded of Spices and Aromatic ingredients; thus we read *John 19. 40. They took the Body of Jesus, and wound it in linnen Clothes with the Spices, as the manner of the Jews was to bury, and they had prepared Ointments for this Purpose, as they used to do to great Personages, see the embalming of Jacob, Gen. 50. 2.*

Luke 23.
55.

God

God would shew Mercy to him and his House.

Gaius, and the elect Lady are both honour'd by the Apostle John, each with a distinct Epistle, for their eminent Appearance for, and Adherence to the Truth; ^{2d and 3d Epist.} and especially for their great Hospitality, in entertaining and succouring the Apostles and their faithful Assistants the Ministers of the Gospel in those Days. These are shining Examples worthy your Imitation, 'twould be a large but a very noble *Cloud of Witnesses*, were we to take Notice of all those who are recorded for their eminent Zeal for God and Christ, and the Support of Religion. But the mention of their Names is perfum'd with the sweet Incense of Divine Approbation, God has publickly own'd 'em, and signified an high esteem for 'em: And that is enough; there is nothing higher to be desir'd, who is more illustrious than *that Man, whose Praise is of God?* We are ^{Heb. 10.} directed to *provoke one another unto love, and* ^{24.} *good Works.* Brethren whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Vertue, if there be any Praise, think on these Things.

And indeed what can be more honourably said of a Person even amongst Men, than that he voluntarily issues out a considerable Part of his Substance for publick good, especially when he levels his Designs for the Spiritual Advantage of others? This vastly heightens the commendable Character. How honourably does it Sound when

when it can be truly said, that such a Person is a great Instrument in the hand of Providence, to keep the Gospel in such a City, Town or Village? he stands as it were in the Gap, and prevents the removal of the *Candlestick* out of it's Place: And tho, the Glory be intirely due to God, who liberally bestow'd the Substance, and Graciously gave the Heart to lay it out, for these good Ends, yet the Inhabitants of that Neighbourhood are more beholding to such a Man than they are aware, he does what lies in his Power to awaken his Neighbours and those round about him, and to forewarn 'em *to flee from the wrath to come, and to secure the things that belong to their eternal peace, before it be too late. Large generous views worthy a Christian Spirit!* What a glorious Reward must be in reserve for such a Righteous Man! Were I in a private Capacity of Life, and had wherewith of this World's Goods, I would secure an able and faithful Ministry where I liv'd.

This is the ready way to draw down the blessings of Heaven, and to reap of the increase of the Earth, the way to honour God here and to be admitted to live with him hereafter.

I have but one word more to add, and that is this, what has been said on this Subject, does not only concern Members of Congregations, and those in Communion, who have actually given up their Names, *first to the Lord, and then to one another according to the will of God.* But 'tis the duty of all others, of common hearers and attendants, to contribute towards supporting the Ministry of the Word. Yea, the duty
of

of Servants and young ones, according to what they have, for the Lord requires no otherwise. This is the way to learn to be useful in your Day, when God shall furnish you with better ability, and raise you to higher Stations in the World. Remember the Mite of the Widow cast into the Treasury, was accepted and narrowly observ'd by the Lord, 'twas look'd upon as more than the Contribution of the Rich, who gave out of their Abundance. Consider the enlargedness and zeal of their Hearts of old, at the Building of the Tabernacle. *And they came every one whose Heart stirred him up, every one whom his Spirit made him willing. And every Man with whom was found Blue, and Purple, and Scarlet, and fine Linen, and Goat's Hair, and red Skins of Rams, and Badgers Skins, bro't 'em. And every Man with whom was found Shittim-Wood, for any work of the Service brought it. And all the Women that were wise-hearted, did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun.* Exod. 25. 21, 22, 23. 25, 26.

Now these things are recorded for our admonition, and shew to us, that the Lord looks at the Heart, and the willing Mind, and that none must be useless in the service of God; 'tis requir'd from us according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. They that can't afford to give much, may be able to give something, and in so doing they discharge a good Conscience toward God.

And now my Brethren, to Conclude, I hope you'll bear the word of Exhortation, I have endeavour'd to set your Duty before you, in as clear Light as I could, and shewn, that before the Law, and under the Law,

and even under the Gospel, 'twas and is the duty of all to assist in supporting the Publick Worship of God. Now, as you regard the honour of our Redeemer, as you would secure the Salvation of your own Souls, as you would promote the eternal welfare of your Families, Relations, and Neighbours, consider well what has been said, give this Doctrine Room and entertainment in your hearts, *and happy are ye, now ye know these Things, if ye do 'em.*



F I N I S.

